



Attachment AUD 1

NORTH CAROLINA COMMUNITY COLLEGE SYSTEM

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President

PERFORMANCE AUDIT

ADULT SECONDARY EDUCATION PROCESS

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INTRODUCTION

Background

The Adult Secondary Education unit of the North Carolina Community College System is part of the Career and College Readiness section at the System Office. It supports the mission of the North Carolina Community College System which is “to open the door to high-quality, accessible educational opportunities that minimize barriers to post-secondary education, maximize student success, develop a globally and multi-culturally competent workforce, and improve the lives and well-being of individuals.”

The General Educational Development Program (GED®) provides instruction to prepare individuals to take the official GED® tests. GED® testing is offered at all 58 community colleges in the North Carolina Community College System and each college is an official GED® testing site. The Adult Secondary Education unit oversees the processing of diplomas and transcripts related to the General Educational Development Program.

Objective, Scope, and Methodology

The objective of this review was to examine the above referenced unit and determine if service times related to diploma and transcript processing can be improved.

The scope of the review included the review and analysis of pertinent data along with interviews with System Office personnel. Data from calendar years 2012 and 2013 was reviewed as it is most current and readily available. Fieldwork and analysis was conducted in January and February, 2014.

FINDINGS

Data related to processing time for transcript, diploma and education verification requests was reviewed and analyzed. In 2012, the average processing time was approximately 17.5 working days. The average processing time for 2013 was approximately 13.5 days.

Transcripts and Education Verifications

One major function of the Adult Secondary Education unit is to process GED® transcript requests as they filter into the office. The protocol for processing requests has been reviewed and updated to create efficiencies, most recently in April, 2013. The process is as follows –

- When processing GED® transcript and education verification requests:
 - Each transcript request is date-stamped when received. Faxed transcripts and education verification requests have a time stamp and therefore do NOT need to be date stamped unless the receipt date is illegible.
 - Each day's transcript and education verification requests are bundled based on the database where the information is stored; not on whether it is a verification or transcript request.
 - Microfilm: 1944 - 1975
 - SIPS: 1976 - 2001
 - Colleague: 2002-present
 - Requests are processed in the order received. Requests are processed from each database each day.
 - Requests for older records in microfilm may not be received every day, but they are to be processed in the order received.
 - Current mailing address is updated if different than the address listed in the database.
 - Mail is picked up at 10:00 a.m. and 2:30 p.m. daily
 - Processed transcripts are mailed by 2:30 p.m. the day processed or by 10:00 a.m. the day following processing.
 - Education verifications are faxed to the requesting agency three (3) days per week.
 - Each day's transcript/education verification requests are bundled following processing. Pages are face up, same direction and labeled with the mailing and/or faxed date.

In 2012, the office processed 37,606 transcript requests along with 3,803 education verifications for a total of 41,409 items. During 2012, 249 days were available as workdays. On average, the Adult Secondary Education unit processed 151 transcripts and 15 education verifications per day. The second year of data reviewed, 2013, showed an increase in items processed. The office processed 49,917 transcript requests and 4,932 education verifications for a total of 54,849 items. There were 250 available workdays in 2013 and the Adult Secondary Education unit processed 200 transcripts and 20 education verifications per day. The increase in total transcripts processed was 12,311 with a per day average increase of 49. Education verifications increased by 1,129 with a per day average increase of five (5). The table below delineates the comparison –

	<u>2012</u>	<u>2013</u>	<u>Change</u>
Transcripts	37,606	49,917	12,311
Average Processed Per Day	151	200	49
Education Verifications	3,803	4,932	1,129
Average Processed Per Day	15	20	5

The System Office incurs a cost to process the transcript and education verification requests. Using a blended salary rate of the individuals primarily assigned to process requests, the cost per transcript in 2012 was \$1.01 and the cost per education verification was \$10.03. In 2013, the cost per transcript was \$0.76 and the cost per education verification was \$7.73. Efficiencies created by a review of protocols contributed to a decrease in cost per transcript of \$0.25 and a decrease in cost per education verification of \$2.30. The table below is presented for comparison purposes –

	<u>2012</u>	<u>2013</u>	<u>Change</u>
Cost per Transcript	\$ 1.01	0.76	(0.25)
Cost per Education Verification	\$ 10.03	7.73	(2.30)

Diplomas

A second major function of the Adult Secondary Education unit is to process diploma requests. The protocol for processing diploma requests mirrors the protocol for processing GED® transcript requests. The unit also prints diplomas on a daily basis. Oklahoma Scoring Services, Inc. uploads North Carolina’s scoring, graduate and error reports daily. The Adult Secondary Education unit downloads and imports the information daily into Colleague, the diploma processing system. For students with records containing no errors, a diploma and transcript automatically prints during the importing process. The error report is reviewed and errors are corrected daily. However, the error correction process is ongoing.

In the year 2012, the Adult Secondary Education unit processed a total of 12,145 diploma requests. Given the 249 available workdays in 2012, an average of 49 diplomas were processed per day. A review of 2013 data showed an increase in items processed as well as an increase in the per day average. A total of 21,266 diplomas were processed in 2013 with a per day average of 85. Total diplomas processed increased 9,121 year-over-year with an increase in the per day average of 36. The table below is presented for comparison purposes –

	<u>2012</u>	<u>2013</u>	<u>Change</u>
Diplomas	12,145	21,266	9,121
Average Processed Per Day	49	85	36

As is the case with transcripts and education verifications, the System Office incurs a cost to process diploma requests. Using a blended salary rate of the individuals primarily assigned to process diploma requests, the cost per diploma was \$3.14 in 2012. In 2013, the cost per diploma was \$1.79, a decrease of \$1.35. The table below is presented for comparison purposes –

	<u>2012</u>	<u>2013</u>	<u>Change</u>
Cost per Diploma	\$ 3.14	1.79	(1.35)

Walk In Services

The Adult Secondary Education unit provides services to “walk ins”, individuals that submit a request in person at the System Office. On average, each walk in service requires 10 minutes to complete according to the Coordinator of Adult Secondary Education. In 2012, a total of 1,599 walk in requests were processed. At an average of 10 minutes per request, the total hours spent on said requests was 266.50 hours, an average of approximately 22 hours per month. A review of 2013 data presented an increase. 2,544 walk in requests were processed in 2013 for a total of 424 hours spent. The monthly average in 2013 was approximately 35 hours. The table below further details the comparison –

	<u>2012</u>	<u>2013</u>	<u>Change</u>
Walk In Requests	1,599	2,544	945
Average Monthly Hours Spent	22	35	13

Reception Desk Duties

The individuals primarily assigned to process transcript, education verification, and diploma requests are required to assist with reception duties, each for one (1) hour per week, a total unit commitment of two (2) hours. Over the course of an average month, a total of eight (8) work hours are spent by unit employees at the reception desk resulting in a loss of one (1) work day.

Other

The Adult Secondary Education unit is comprised of a staff of three (3). Two (2) employees have the primary duty of responding to requests. Based on interview responses and observation, each employee appears knowledgeable in their area of expertise. However, the respective knowledge of multiple areas is not as strong. Thus, a lack of cross training is a hindrance to the unit.

RECOMMENDATIONS

In light of the findings referenced above, the following recommendations are presented to assist System Office leadership in reducing processing times and, in turn, providing better customer service -

Recommendation 1

System Office leadership should determine a desired processing time for requests. Establishing a goal affords leadership with a tool needed to quantify the level of success related to processing times.

Recommendation 2

System Office leadership should examine various ways by which processing times can be reduced and customer service improved. Allocating additional resources in the form of manpower to the Adult Secondary Education unit is one option and should result in a reduction in processing times.

A second option is outsourcing as much of the transcript and diploma processing as possible. Due to an ever increasing volume of requests and the time sensitive nature of the requests, an outside vendor may have the resources to fulfill the requests at a rate significantly less than 13.5 working days.

Recommendation 3

More intensive cross training needs to be provided to employees in the Adult Secondary Education unit.

Recommendation 4

Employees of the Adult Secondary Education unit should be relieved of reception desk duties.